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ABSTRACT

A study was conducted to test a method of instruction designed to incorporate communication and reasoning skills into the regular content of liberal arts courses. Eleven instructors teaching in nine liberal arts disciplines were trained in the areas of reading and study skills, writing, speaking and listening, and reasoning. Instructors were expected to integrate these skills into their content area courses. An examination of how the project faculty integrated speaking and listening into their courses indicated that speaking objectives largely mirrored those of writing, asking for a clear sense of idea and purpose and expecting effective use of evidence. Examples of assignments included relatively informal early speaking assignments, formal speaking assignments ranging from informative to persuasive speeches, and debates. Listening objectives were frequently inherent in the speaking objectives. Exercises designed to develop language and reasoning activities included vocabulary development activities. One of the strategies for teaching reasoning included analyzing the parts of an argument. (The appendix includes critical thinking exercises used by project members.) (MKM)

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"Teaching Speech Communication in College Content Courses"

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Presented at the 66th annual meeting of the
Speech Communication Association

November 14, 1980

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Ithaca College has just completed its second year of a project funded by the Fund for the Improvement of Post-Secondary Education (FIPSE). The Ithaca College Project began to test a method of instruction designed to incorporate communication and reasoning skills into the regular content of liberal arts courses. Specifically, eleven instructors teaching in nine liberal arts disciplines (art history, biology, chemistry, drama, English, history, linguistics, psychology, speech communication) were trained in the areas of reading and study skills, writing, speaking and listening, and reasoning. Instructors were to integrate these skill areas into their content area courses. The project was extraordinarily ambitious. Faculty members in the project were not told what to teach or what to include from the skill areas noted above. Rather, they were instructed in the skill areas (over the course of a semester) and expected to revise their syllabi and develop teaching strategies which would enable their students to achieve the project objectives which the project faculty had developed. But the faculty themselves had to make the connections between the skill areas and their own disciplines.

My own participation in the project was threefold: I was one of five project leaders, responsible for training project faculty in speaking and listening; I taught a public communication course in the project; as an assistant dean in the School of Humanities and Sciences, I am responsible for the college's reading and writing programs. Thus, the FIPSE Project dovetailed nicely with my own academic and administrative concerns. I want to do two things this morning. First, I want to describe how project faculty integrated speaking and listening into their courses, and, second, I want to suggest that teachers of speech communication are uniquely qualified to incorporate the crucial areas of language and reasoning into their own or others' coursework. My remarks will necessarily be suggestive, not exhaustive, but their potential application should be apparent to those who teach within or without the discipline of speech communication. Speech communication instruction can be profitably, introduced into virtually any college course, and this instruction must include special emphasis on areas endemic to a sound liberal education--language

and reasoning. Let me first turn to a brief discussion of how project faculty integrated speaking and listening into their courses.

Most project faculty were not concerned with speaking and listening objectives before the project began. Unlike writing, oral communication skills were incidental to the goals of pre-project courses. Fortunately, except for differences caused by the channel of communication, speaking objectives largely mirrored those of writing: a clear sense of idea and purpose, effective use of evidence, and exposition through definitions and other means were objectives common to speech and writing. Differences in the two modes centered on the nature of oral style and its easier adaptability to a variety of situations (since the speaker, unlike the writer, knows who is the audience).

Speaking and Listening Objectives

To prepare and present extemporaneous remarks on some assigned topic, remarks which demonstrate:

a clear statement of main idea;

the student's conception of what he/she wants the audience to understand or believe;

clear marshalling of pertinent evidence;

definitions when appropriate or necessary;

oral, not written, style;

adaptation to specific situation.

Many project instructors had students summarize reading assignments orally, or some variation thereof. The chemistry instructor asked students for oral presentations of their library research, followed by class discussion, as well as reports in smaller groups on "something interesting" found in an elementary chemistry journal. Literature instructors also used reading assignments to generate speaking strategies. In one class students orally explicated theme, parallels, and patterns in their readings while another instructor had students introduce short stories by briefly reacting to or raising questions about the story - - anything but a summary. Other less formal speaking assignments included student analyses of art history

slides from a variety of perspectives, analysis of the structure of a play or plays, interviews and introduction of classmates - - brief assignments designed to expose students to a variety of situations in the context of their course work while trying to achieve sepcific speaking objectives.

In addition to these relatively informal early speaking assignments, project faculty designed more sophisticated speaking assignments as the semester progressed, assignments which required students to synthesize the speaking objectives. For example, students in art history presented a five minute speech analyzing spatial devices and conventions in a student-chosen painting or sculpture. Students in public communication progressed from informative to persuasive speeches, with the final speech one in which the student had to choose a purpose toward which the audience was hostile and adapt materials to that particular situation. For her final assignment the linguistics instructor required a "video-paper," that is, an oral presentation of the students' final papers which incorporated visual aids and other adaptations to oral, not written, communication. Students in history engaged in debates, wherin participants chose or were assigned sides of a question, researched the topic, and presented their side to the class while refuting the opposition. Related to this is role-playing, which is excellent for instruction in levels of comprehension. Based upon assigned readings students respond to questions raised by the moderator, with participants adopting the persona--the mental set--of particular persons or schools of thought. A complete example of one instructor's oral assignment is included below.

Oral Assignment

Prepare a 2-4 minute talk which tells the main idea of the topic, what is involved in the process or area of development, why this topic is important to the understanding of development. The content of this short talk should stem from your understanding of the assigned readings in Papalia and Olds (Chapters 1, 2, or 3) and Vasta. This assignment is not intended to be a library research project.

Below you will find an example of a well-organized talk.

Genetic counseling

What is the Topic?	Genetic counseling is a means of finding out information about your genetic makeup and patterns of inheritance to uncover the possibility of producing an abnormal child.

What does it involve?	There are several steps involved in the counseling process. First, one contacts an authorized counselor; this person may be a ...The counselor takes a thorough family history, including information about diseases and causes of death...Secondly, each parent and child in the family receives a physical examination. Third, laboratory tests are conducted to investigate the person's chromosomal makeup,... etc.
When would you seek it?	You may seek genetic counseling if an immediate relative has biven birth to a child with defects or if...
Why is this topic important to the study of developmental psychology?	Children born with defects often live a very different life from normal children. For example, a child born with no arms is reacted to by others differently from a child who has all its limbs. This defect may have a signigicant impact on the child's self-concept and social-emotional development. Also parents who have given birth to a child with a defect may have feelings of guilt, anger...
Conclusion Statement	If couples suspect some potential genetic abnormality and seek genetic counseling, they gain the awareness of the possibility of bearing a child with a defect. They can choose not to have a child or gain time to prepare for the special caring such a child will require to insure healthy development.

Notice that the short talk was based on the answers to a few short questions. When you choose a topic for your short talk, ask yourself a set of questions that will guide the organization of your thoughts.

A crucial issue raised by project faculty was the difficulty of incorporating speaking assignments into limited class time. Whereas student writing consumes only the instructor's time, student speeches can be done only in class time. Project faculty developed two basic strategies to overcome this difficulty. First, speaking assignments which replaced teacher talk were used. Instead of the instructor introducing a short story, a student did so. Rather than the instructor's analysis of art history slides, students' analyses were substituted. Debates, role playing, oral book reports, etc. were designed to complement the teacher's role, but were not simply added on to what an instructor might have done before the project. Second, especially with the longer, more formal assignments, audience size or topic were varied. Thus, for a five minute speech in art history, half the students analyzed paintings while the other half, at a later date, analyzed a piece of sculpture. Video papers in linguistics were video taped in private, and students chose five of their peers' papers to view and evaluate. In sum, because of limited class

time, speaking assignments are more difficult than writing to integrate into courses. Still, as the strategies above indicate, imaginative instructors can overcome the problem of limited class time by designing assignments which substitute student talk for teacher talk and by being flexible in their use of audience size and topic choice.

Although the project's speaking objectives were more detailed than the single listening objective, it should be clear that for each speaking objective there is an inherent listening objective. It is, after all, the listeners, not the speaker, who decide whether the main idea is clear, or whether the evidence is pertinent. Given the central place of the receiver in the communication process, project faculty devised simple strategies to emphasize the importance of good listening technique. Very popular was comparison of student notes on a particular lecture or discussion. Similarities and (surprising) differences in notes led to instruction in both note-taking and listening techniques. Other strategies to improve student listening were asking students to summarize main ideas or arguments, or to restate examples, details, statistics, etc. in an ongoing discussion or lecture. Asking "Where are we now?" requires students to immediately categorize and focus their preceptions. To sharpen students' listening techniques in formal speaking assignments, most project faculty used an audience response form. These forms, which could be adapted to particular courses or assignments, typically required students to state reasons for their judgment of their peers' speeches. (e.g., "I could/could not follow the main points of the speech because _____." is a typical question on an audience response form.) Thus, student speakers received oral and written reactions to their efforts by both the instructor and their peers. Listeners were required to attend closely and to articulate clearly their judgments. As the semester progressed students could be expected to proceed from early impressionistic judgments to more objective, defensible statements based upon well-defined criteria.

You may, at this point, be thinking that the aforementioned strategies to integrate speaking and listening into college content courses are workable, but not remarkable. I agree with that assessment. But what is noteworthy about them, and about the more general idea of skills integration, is that faculty members from other disciplines could devise the strategies themselves instead of simply being presented with them. One of the more important ideas emerging from the Bay Area Writing Project (of which you may be familiar) is that instructional techniques work best when they are organic, that is, when they emerge from immediate needs and objectives, preferably by those most directly involved in the situation. These strategies exemplify that philosophy.

In addition to incorporating speaking and listening into college content courses, the Ithaca College Project sought to integrate language and reasoning skills as well. Before illustrating what we did, I want briefly to discuss the need for including these skills in any course, especially those concerned with speech communication.

Each of us, when asked what is the objective of our course, or of a liberal arts education, would reply "ultimately, to teach students how to think." Fine. That being the case, I submit that it is our responsibility to provide direct instruction in language and reasoning, the two elements most clearly necessary for "thinking." ("Thinking" is for me too slipery a concept; I suspect that when we say we want students to think, we mean we want them to be able to draw reasoned conclusions.) The Rockefeller Foundation's just-issued book, The Humanities in American Life (University of California Press), bemoans the state of liberal arts education and urges that "critical thinking" be defined as a basic skill along with reading and writing. One needn't spend time defending their position. But we should be cognizant of an important distinction: the fact that students think or reason in our classes does not mean that we instruct them in that activity. Simultaneity does not imply a cause-effect relationship. If we

accept that, and we accept my contention that teachers of speech communication are uniquely trained and situated to instruct in language and reasoning, then we should consciously integrate those areas into other courses. Let me end my sermonette and turn to some examples of how faculty from a variety of disciplines integrated language and reasoning skills into their courses.

The language and reasoning objectives of the I.C. Project were:

to increase knowledge of general and discipline - specific words by using context clues and structural analysis;

to recognize and construct clear definitions of words/concepts;

to understand the meaning of single statements/claims and to process them for their verification and/or justification;

to construct sound arguments and to determine the soundness of other's arguments.

The strategies faculty developed to assist students to increase their vocabulary were numerous. Professors provided for worthwhile word study in two areas: general vocabulary development and technical and specialized terminology. For these areas, a series of strategies will be catalogued, and detailed curricular activities representative of vocabulary instruction will then be presented.

Instructional strategies included the following:

1. Involving students in organized instruction and discussion on the nature of language. For example, in the course, "Public Communication," students received the following assignment after a brief unit on semantics:

   "Choosing language carefully: You are to select a basic principle from any field. (Examples: biology--the process of photosynthesis; mathematics--rate X time equals distance; drama--the Stanislavsky method; etc.) Explain the same principle to two different but distinct people. For example, explain the principle of diminishing returns (an economic theory) to an auto mechanic and to a 10 year old. Obviously, the intent of the assignment is to have you think carefully about language choices. Can you, after completing the assignment, defend what you've done based upon what you know about language? (This assignment is to be written out and handed in. Most will be read in class.)"

2. Using structural analysis to provide insight into word meanings. For example, "Get the student to recognize the buried imagery or literal Greek or Latin root of some of Thoreau's words (deliberately)."

3. Using contextual clues to infer word meaning. For example, "What is the distinction between 'being scared' and 'being afraid' in Part I of "The Bear"? The dictionary will be some help, but the full distinction can best be derived from the surrounding context itself."

4. Studying the connotations of words. For example, "Discuss Twain's use of inappropriate connotation as a source of humor. For example, in Chapter 17 Huck describes a drawing of 'a dead bird laying on its back with its heel up and underneath the picture it said "I Shall Never Hear Thy Sweet Cherrup More Alas'."

5. Examining the nature of definitions. For example, "Point out examples of good definitions in the text. Compare the condensed nature of these scientific definitions with the nature of definitions in the social sciences and humanities."

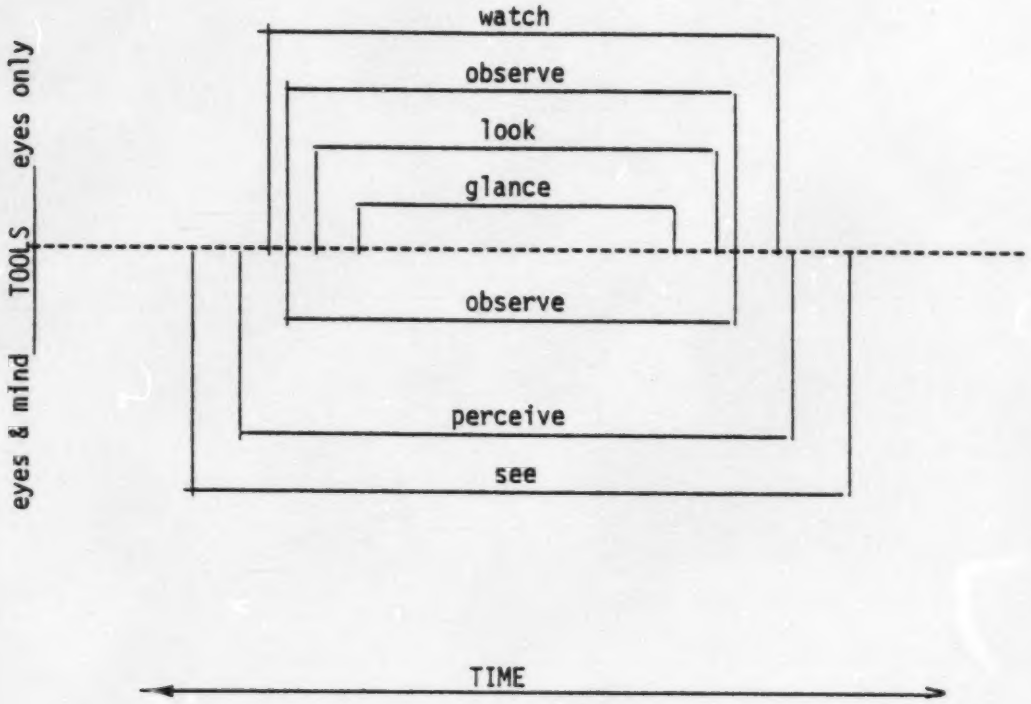
The instructional techniques for vocabulary development have been generalized so far. Here, it will be useful to describe a representative content area strategy in detail. An objective of the "Introduction to Art" course was to increase student's knowledge of general words as well as discipline-specific words. For each unit of the course, the professor gave students a vocabulary list, and in each class she taught them a set of these words.

At the outset of the course, in order to differentiate between the common usage definition of a word and the art student's definition, she used an activity called a "word mosaic." For example, she differentiated between "seeing" rather than "looking" as the activity basic to the visual experience of art by engaging the students in the following activity:

1. The class was asked to supply words which were related in meaning to the word "look," and these words were added to a diagram which attempted to indicate graphically their relationships of meaning, including what we choose to call "tool" and "time" factors.

2. The class then read together a xeroxed page from a dictionary, examining the details of the definition of the word "see" (including the noun entry).

3. On the board we chose to list several meanings of "see" that were appropriate for describing our exercise itself, (DISCOVER, VISUALIZE, UNDERSTAND), and then tested those meanings in sentences.



Later in the semester when the students were able to distinguish between a word's general meaning and its exact meaning for art, the professor showed them how to establish a "range definition" for certain artistic terms. This exercise allowed students to use induction to arrive at a working definition of a key term. For example, for the term, "architecture," students compared various dictionary definitions with the definitions of "architecture" provided in the glossaries of several texts assigned as reserve readings. This exercise is out-lined below:

1. General discussion of the general use of the terms "architect" and "architecture" and the concept of a discipline specific word.

2. Diagram was drawn on the board establishing polar values of the term "architecture" and we added items to it in the appropriate position as the discussion progressed. Discussion was guided by the showing of pairs of slides which students were asked to identify as architecture or non-architecture, giving their reasons. We then listed what we had agreed upon to be essential qualities forming our understanding of the meaning or definition of "architecture."

(Works of Architecture already studied)	Slides Shown (Items to Categorize)	Essential Qualities
Fallingwater-F.L. Wright	Pyramids of Egypt	
	a volcano	1. man-made
Parthenon, Athens	equestrian momument in sculptural relief	2. three-dimensional form
	momumental Calder sculpture made of I-beams	
	Alice Aycock construction of wood filling a room	and space
	Yaman Real Estate, Dryden	3. psychological function
	Duck-shaped store selling L.I. Duckling	and physical function
Eiffel Tower, Paris	Statue of Liberty	
	Eads Bridge	4. conscious design of form, space, function
	Al's diner	
	Rattle and Snap, ante-bellum mansion in the South	but not necessarily by a professional architect

Albert Kahn's Dodge Truck Factory	Ramada Inn Pyramid Mall Knights of Columbus, Ithaca	5. Intelligent effort to combine practical and aesthetic factors
LeCorbusier-Villa Savoye	suburan "colonial" house, Ithaca	

(Non-essential qualities: date, material, use or purpose, a unique or extremely unusual form)

That an inextricable relationship between language and reasoning exists is obvious to us. Just as an artist must know his materials, a reasoner must know that language is the stuff through which reasons are adduced. I'm less certain that this is obvious to our students. In any case, I do not have the time here to illustrate strategies for instruction in reasoning (although I do include some examples in the paper). In general, these strategies should focus on what an argument is and how it can be analyzed and evaluated. Let me note that of late I've been increasingly frustrated by the Toulmin model for analyzing arguments. It's just too difficult for students to understand. Let me instead plug Michael Scriven's book, Reasoning (McGraw-Hill, 1976), wherin Scriven explains (quite lucidly, I think) seven steps in argument analysis. My apologies to Toulmin and his devotees.

I know I've tried to cover a lot of ground in this paper, and I hope the focus has not been too diffuse. What began as an illustration of a successful project for integrating speech communication with college content courses has moved to a plea for the inclusion of language and reasoning instruction in all our courses. I see the connection between these ideas; I hope you do also. Language and reasoning are endemic to liberal arts education. If we can successfully define these areas as our purview, we can enhance our stature in the eyes of "the administration," our students, our colleagues, and ourselves.

NOTES

Portions of this paper are included in Ithaca College's final project report to FIPSE, prepared by Howard Erlich and Mary Lynch Kennedy.

The critical thinking exercises appended to the paper were prepared by Louisa Swift, Assistant Professor, Ithaca College, based upon her participation in a faculty workshop designed to instruct Ithaca College faculty in the integration of skills into college content courses. Some exercises have been previously distributed at the Basic Course Director's Conference, Atlantic City, N.J., October, 1980.

L.H.W. Swift
H.S. Erlich
Basic Course Directors' Conference

Exercise No. 2

Small Group Communication

Skill area concentration: Writing, Critical Thinking

This task is designed to help the student learn to:

1. Recognize a thesis and its supporting points
2. Recognize supporting materials
3. Evaluate evidence
4. Recognize bias in his/her own and others thinking
5. Analyze various audiences

L. H. W. Swift

Small Group Communication, Fall, 1980

Task

Read the attached article, an editorial which appeared recently in the Ithaca Journal. At our next class meeting, submit a paper (guidelines explained below) in which you have answered the following questions:

A. What is the thesis of the editorial ?

B. What points are subordinate to the thesis ?

C. What evidence does the writer offer in support of the thesis and its subordinate points. Name the type of evidence employed.

D. Evaluate the evidence offered against the tests of evidence discussed in class.

E. Discuss the writer's bias. How does it compare to your own on this issue.

F. If the writer were to deliver a speech on this subject to your class, how do you think it would be received ? Answer the same question but imagine that the audience is composed of your classmates' parents.

Product

1. Parts A, B, and C should be presented in your own words in the form of a complete sentence outline.

2. Parts D, E, and F should be presented in a 1-2 page essay.

Evaluation

1. The outline will be assessed according to the scheme described in class.

2. The essay will be evaluated against the scale distributed at the beginning of the semester.

3. To obtain your grade I shall combine both scores.

AN UNTYPED PAPER IS UNACCEPTABLE.

L.H.W. Swift
H.S. Erlich
Basic Course Directors' Conference
Skill Area Concentration:
Critical Thinking

Evaluating Evidence

Small Group Communication

These "bits of wisdom" printed below have been culled from various textbooks concerning communication. Read them. Then apply the tests of evidence we have discussed in class. Also, consider the assumptions which underlie any assertions offered.

1. "In a nine year study of 7,000 subjects, Lisa Berkman, an epidemologist for the California Department of Health, found that people with few or no strong social relationships died at a rate of from two to four and one-half times greater than more socially oriented people."
(From: Interact: The Process of Interpersonal Communication-Adler, Rosenfeld, and Towne)

2. "In the United States in 1975 there were 12.6 deaths by suicide for every 100,000 population. In 1965 there were 11.6 suicides per 100,000. This increase amounts to a bit more than 8 percent in ten years. In the last fifteen years there has been a 90 % increase in suicides among young people between the ages of fifteen and twenty-one."
(From: Interact: The Process of Interpersonal Communication-Adler, Rosenfeld, and Towne)

3. "There are also some unusual patterns of dying among couples who have spent long lives together. When one spouse dies, the other often perishes "coincidentally" within a few months. This pattern extends to other family members, too. In one rural village in Wales, investigatators studied 903 close relatives of 371 residents who died between 1960 and 1965. Almost 5 % of these persons died within one year of the death of the close relative. For comparison, the death rate was 0.7 % of the persons of the same age living in the same village who had not experienced a relative's death. Loneliness,lack of contact, diminished communication is now recognized as the factor contributing to premature death."
(From: Together: Communicating Interpersonally-Stewart and D'Angelo)

4. "In picking Mr. George Bush as his second-best choice for running mate, Mr. Ronald Reagan has sought to reassure those, both at home and abroad, who feared that this would be an uncompromisingly right-wing team. He has not run any great risk of splitting his own faction by doing so, but-as his own hesitations show-he may not have reassured people either. Mr. Bush is conservative by most standards. The former United Nations ambassador does not inspire immediate confidence either as a profound thinker or as a polished performer. If he is to propel Mr. Reagan into the White House he will not only have to broaded his appeal to middle-of-the-road voters but also show the doubters among the image-makers in the press and television that he is of presidential timber. Mr. Reagan, if elected, will be the oldest president in America's history, and it is quite possible that Mr. Bush will inherit the presidency and the Republican Party as a consequence of a rushed last Wednesday night.
(From: The Economist-July 19, 1980)

Evaluating Evidence, Con't

5. The White House hoped that when Mr. Billy Carter owned up to his Libyan connections and registered himself as an agent for that country, as he did on July 14th, that would be the end of the affair. Newspapers and television, however, managed to produce a fresh revelation every day this week and Republicans smelled blood: Capitol Hill was awash with their demands for congressional investigations into the conduct of both the president's brother and the White House. For the most part, Democrats kept an embarrassed silence. But on Wednesday the senate judiciary committee gave four of its members 48 hours to report whether or not a special committee should investigate the matter.
The incident does not look, so far, like burgeoning into a "Democratic Watergate", as some Republicans privately hope. The episode has generated much voter-oriented sound and fury, but little substance. Yet it has also revealed some appallingly bad judgment on the part of the White House, and a serious matter remains unanswered.

(From: The Economist, July 19,1980)

L.H.W. Swift
H.S. Erlich
Basic Course Directors' Conference

General Semantics

First Short Paper

Skill area concentration: Writing, Critical Thinking

TASK

1. Read the following article:
   Hastorf, Albert H. and Hadley Cantril. "They Saw A Game: A Case Study", Journal of Abnormal and Social Psychology 49 (January, 1954) p. 129-134.

2. Choose a controversial issue about which you do not hold particularly strong opinions. Acceptable types of issues are: conflicts among friends or family members, controversies which have recieved national or international attention, conflicts which originated on and have been confined to the Ithaca College community.

3. Interview two people who espouse opposing viewpoints. (You are responsible for developing the interview schedule: obviously, in order to do so, you will have to know something about the issue, but try to avoid forming a strong opinion.

PRODUCT

In a 1-2 page essay, address the following topics:

1. Describe the issue briefly, but offer enough detail so that I can comprehend it.

2. Describe the persons whom you interviewed, but do not name them.

3. Compare the language and the classifications used by each interviewee. Also compare the evidence cited by each. What details did one omit which the other mentioned? What details were omitted by both? Did either interviewee assume what could be described as a two-valued orientation? You should include several examples in this section to illustrate your assertions.

4. Had you interviewed others, what additional viewpoints on the issue might you have heard?

5. Describe what happened to your own opinion as you listened to each interviewee. Did you find that you were persuaded by the appeal of either? Why? Why not? Were you able to remain emotionless (objective) throughout the interviews.

EVALUATION

The essay will be evaluated according to the scale distributed previously.